
REMARKS ON EDUCATION,

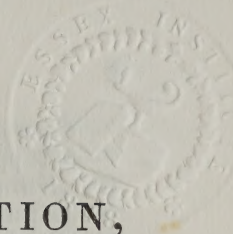
BY

MR. RANTOUL, OF GLOUCESTER.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

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1. *The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Chapter Fifth.*
2. *The Revised Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, passed November 4th, 1835, *Chapter Twenty-third.*
3. *An Act authorizing the Establishment of District School Libraries.* April 12th, 1837.
4. *An Act to establish a Board of Education.* April 20th, 1837.
5. *An Act concerning Schools.* April 13th, 1838.
6. *First Annual Report of the Board of Education, together with the First Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board.* Printed Document of the Senate, No. 26. February 1st, 1838. pp. 75.
7. *Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education, on the Subject of School Houses*, supplementary to his *First Annual Report.* Printed Document of the Senate, No. 80. March 29th, 1838. pp. 64.
8. *Report on Elementary Public Instruction in Europe, made to the Thirty-sixth General Assembly of the State of Ohio.* December 19, 1837. By C. E. STOWE. Reprinted by Order of the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Massachusetts. March 29th, 1838. Printed Document of the House, No. 64. pp. 68.
9. *Report and Resolves relative to qualifying Teachers of*

- Common Schools. Printed Document of the House, No. 57. pp. 8.*
10. *Abstract of the Massachusetts School Returns, for 1837. January 1st, 1838. pp. 302.*
 11. *Resolves relative to qualifying Teachers for Common Schools. April 19th, 1838.*

PERHAPS no people on the face of the earth were ever more deeply imbued with a sense of the necessity of providing for all the children of the community a wholesome education, than the Pilgrims who landed on the rock of Plymouth, and their immediate descendants and successors, the founders of the New England States. They indeed seem, like that Eastern monarch who excelled the age in which he lived in the homely wisdom of common sense, as much as in all the learning of his time, to have regarded the training up of the rising generation in the way they should go, as the only effectual preparation to fit them to walk in the path of virtue. They were not the men to neglect any known duty ; and, accordingly, their conduct evinces an anxious determination, from the very first, to bequeath to their posterity, wisdom, knowledge, and virtue, generally diffused, to be the stability of their times, their trust and stay amid all coming dangers. No one who reviews their early legislation can fail to perceive that they regarded Education as the sheet-anchor of the public welfare, the essential security of the highest temporal and eternal interests of the mighty family of nations ; in whose majestic march, conquest, and occupation, over this newly discovered continent, God's Providence had ordained them to be the pioneers.

If an undertaking, commenced upon the principles of Anglo-American colonization had totally miscarried, if the various obstacles which the adventurous fathers of the Western world were destined to encounter had for ever frustrated and extinguished their enterprise, it would still have interested us intensely as an object of philosophical curiosity. But, when we know that it has succeeded, and consider the consequences of its success, it stands out in prominent relief above all other facts, the original, peculiar, heaven-directed phenomenon of human history. Love to God and man, freedom, light and progress were the guiding and governing motives of their holy work. When we look back upon

those chosen instruments of our redemption from the fetters which yet bind speech and action, nay, thought and conscience, in the world from which they came out, their magnanimous purpose, carried into effect as it was, with the stern inflexibility of an abiding conviction of duty, kindles in our hearts a glow of admiration and gratitude. But when we view their great design accomplished, and regard the immensity of its results, the moral grandeur of the spectacle rises to a character of sublimity that can never be surpassed, and can scarcely be paralleled.

A refined civilization, and a superior political organization, at, or near, the close of the present century, will have peopled the States of the American Union with one hundred millions of inhabitants, and children are already born who will live to be the fellow countrymen of more than double that number. Why is it impossible that these hundred, or two hundred millions of human beings should be doomed to live slaves? Because their fathers were educated in freedom. Why is it impossible that they should grovel in sensuality, or debase themselves into a sordid selfishness? Because their fathers were educated in Christianity. Why is it impossible that they should groan in want, dragging out their existence in pauperism and misery? Because their fathers have been educated in the application of the sciences to the useful arts, and in the prudent and wise economy of public and private duty, of social and domestic life.

If confidence animates our anticipations, and hope gilds our prospect, it is because we are educated to the capacity of enjoyment. If a doubt sometimes overclouds the future, it is when the fear steals upon us,—may it prove an idle apprehension,—that we shall not hold true to the trust confided to us, and that the cause of education may suffer in our hands. Should our fortunes come to that issue, we should be left without excuse; the whole world would cry out against us, and we should condemn ourselves, degenerate sons of noble ancestors.

The foundation of the College, and the instruction of all the children in the English tongue, the capital laws, and the grounds and principles of religion, were among the first objects of attention in the Massachusetts colony. In the Colony Laws, under date of 1642, we find the following enactment;

“Whereas, through the good hand of God upon us, there is a college founded in Cambridge, in the county of Middlesex, called Harvard College, for the encouragement whereof this court hath given the sum of four hundred pounds, and also the revenue of the ferry betwixt Charlestown and Boston ; and that the well ordering and managing of the said college is of great concernment ; It is therefore ordered, that the Governor and Deputy, and all the magistrates within the jurisdiction, together with the teaching elders of Cambridge, Watertown, Charlestown, Boston, Roxbury, and Dorchester, and the president of the college, shall have power to establish statutes and constitutions for the instituting, guiding, and furthering of the members thereof in piety, morality, and learning, and also to manage the revenues.”

In May 1650 ;

“Whereas, through the good hand of God, many well devoted persons have been, and daily are, moved and stirred up to give and bestow sundry gifts, legacies, lands, and revenues for the advancement of all good literature, arts, and sciences, &c. * * * and for all necessary provisions that may conduce to the education of the English and Indian youth of this country in knowledge and godliness ; It is therefore ordered for the furthering of so good a work, that the college shall be henceforth a corporation, &c.”

The act went on to grant sundry exemptions of their lands from taxes, their goods from tolls, customs, and excises, and their servants and officers from civil and military services, watchings, and wardings.

In 1654 ;

“Whereas we cannot but acknowledge the great goodness of God towards his people in this wilderness, in raising up schools of learning, and especially the college, from whence there hath sprung many instruments, both in church and commonwealth, both to this and other places, * * * fearing least we should show ourselves ungrateful to God, or unfaithful to posterity, if so good a seminary of knowledge and virtue should fall to the ground through any neglect of ours ; It is therefore ordered, that one hundred pounds be yearly added to the country rate, to be paid to the college treasurer for the behoof and maintenance of the president and fellows of the college.”

Since that time the bounty of the Colony, Province, and Commonwealth, has been extended to our ancient University, in donations of land and money, to an amount far beyond the patronage of any other State of our Union, to any other seminary.

In May, 1642, the legislature gave their attention to domestic education ;

“ Forasmuch as the good education of children is of singular behoof and benefit to any commonwealth, and whereas many parents and masters are too indulgent and negligent of their duty in that kind ; the selectmen of every town, in the several precincts and quarters where they dwell, shall have a vigilant eye over their brethren and neighbours, to see, first, that none of them shall suffer so much barbarism in any of their families, as not to endeavour to teach, by themselves or others, their children and apprentices, so much learning, as may enable them perfectly to read the English tongue, and knowledge of the capital laws ; upon penalty of twenty shillings for each neglect therein.

“ Also, that all masters of families do once a week (at the least) catechize their children and servants in the grounds and principles of religion ; and if any be unable to do so much, that then, at the least, they procure such children and apprentices to learn some short orthodox catechism without book, that they may be able to answer unto the questions that shall be propounded to them out of such catechism, by their parents or masters, or any of the selectmen when they shall call them to a trial of what they have learned in that kind.

“ And, further, that all parents and masters do breed and bring up their children and apprentices in some honest lawful calling, labor, or employment, either in husbandry or some other trade, profitable for themselves and the commonwealth, if they will not or cannot train them up in learning to fit them for higher employments.

“ And if any of the selectmen, after admonition by them given to such masters of families, shall find them still negligent of their duty in the particulars aforementioned, whereby children and servants become rude, stubborn, and unruly ; the said selectmen with the help of two magistrates, or the next county court for that shire, shall take such children or apprentices from them, and place them with some masters for years, (boys till they come to twenty-one, and girls eighteen years of age complete,) which will more strictly look unto, and force them to submit unto government, according to the rules of this order, if by fair means and former instructions they will not be drawn unto it.”

And in 1654 ;

“ Forasmuch as it appeareth by too much experience, that divers children and servants do behave themselves disobediently and disorderly towards their parents, masters, and governors, to the disturbance of families and discouragement of such

parents and governors ; It is ordered, that any magistrate may sentence the offender to corporal punishment, by whipping or otherwise, not exceeding ten stripes."

Meanwhile other securities had been found necessary. In 1647, was adopted the following provision ;

" Whereas, sundry gentlemen of quality, and others, oft-times send over their children into this country to some friends here, hoping (at least) thereby to prevent their extravagant and riotous courses, who notwithstanding (by means of some unadvised or ill affected persons, which give them credit, in expectation their friends either in favor to them, or prevention of blemish to themselves, will discharge their debts) they are no less lavish and profuse here, to the great grief of their friends, dishonor of God, and reproach of the country ; it is, therefore, ordered, that credits given to minors should be forfeited, and penalties incurred by minors, by means of their creditors, beyond their own ability to discharge, should be paid by their creditors."

And in 1651 ;

" Upon information of divers loose, vain, and corrupt persons, both such as come from foreign parts, as also some others here inhabiting or residing, which insinuate themselves into the fellowship of the young people of this country, drawing them both by night and day, from their callings, studies, and honest occupations, and lodging-places, to the dishonor of God, and grief of their parents, masters, tutors, guardians, and overseers ; It is ordered, that whoever shall entertain children, servants, apprentices, scholars belonging to the college, or any Latin school, and shall not discharge and hasten all such youths to their several employments and places of abode or lodging, shall forfeit forty shillings, on conviction before a magistrate, or commissioner authorized to end small causes."

The peculiar glory of Massachusetts is, that she led the way in establishing a system of common schools. Not to keep and maintain the schools required by law, has been an indictable offence in Massachusetts, since 1647. The following is an act of that year ;

" It being one chief project of Satan to keep men from the knowledge of the Scripture, as in former times keeping them in unknown tongues, so in these latter times by persuading from the use of tongues, that so at least the true sense and meaning of the original might be clouded and corrupted with false glosses of deceivers ; to the end that learning may not be buried in the graves of our forefathers, in church and commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavours ;

“It is therefore ordered by this court and the authority thereof, that every township within this jurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to the number of fifty householders, shall then forthwith appoint one within their towns to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read, whose wages shall be paid either by the parents or masters of such children, or by the inhabitants in general, by way of supply, as the major part of those that order the prudentials of the town shall appoint; provided that those who send their children be not oppressed by paying much more than they can have them taught for in other towns.

“And it is further ordered, that where any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families or householders, they shall set up a grammar school, the master thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the university; and if any town neglect the performance hereof above one year, then every such town shall pay five pounds per annum to the next such school, till they shall perform this order.”

The religious qualifications of teachers were not overlooked.

“Forasmuch as it greatly concerns the welfare of this country, that the youth thereof be educated, not only in good literature, but in sound doctrine, the court therefore commends it to the serious consideration and special care of the overseers of the college, and the selectmen in the several towns, not to suffer in the office of instructing youth, any that have manifested themselves unsound in the faith, or scandalous in their lives, and have not given satisfaction according to the rules of Christ.”

In May, 1671, the court upon weighty reasons judged meet to double the penalty upon towns of one hundred families neglecting to keep a grammar school. In October, 1683, the court ordered every town consisting of more than five hundred families to set up and maintain two grammar schools, and two writing schools. The Province Law of 1692 reenacted the Colony Laws, except that of 1683.

All these laws were found to be less effectual than the legislators had hoped, and from time to time measures were taken to enforce them. A colony law, reciting the requisition that all children and youth be taught to read perfectly the English tongue, knowledge in the capital laws, some orthodox catechism, and some honest employment, — “the neglect whereof, as by sad experience from court to court abundantly appears, doth occasion much sin and profaneness

to increase among us, to the dishonor of God, and the enervating of many children and servants, and is a great discouragement to those family governors, who conscientiously endeavour to bring up their youth in all Christian nurture, as the laws of God and this commonwealth require ; ” — orders that it be notified to the selectmen in every town, that the former laws must be obeyed, and directs lists to be made out, and returned to the next court, of all young persons who live from under family government.

In 1702, it was recited, that the school law was shamefully neglected by divers towns, tending greatly to the nourishment of ignorance and irreligion, and the penalty for non-observance of the law was fixed at twenty pounds per annum. It was enacted, that the grammar school-master should be approved by the ministers of the town and the two next adjacent towns, that no minister of any town should be the school-master of the town, and that the grand jurors should present all breaches and neglect of the school laws.

In 1712 ;

“ Forasmuch as the well educating and instructing of children and youth in families and schools are a necessary means to propagate religion and good manners, and the conversation and example of heads of families and schools having great influence on those under their care and government to an imitation thereof ; it is enacted, that none shall keep school, but such as are of sober and good conversation, with the allowance of the selectmen, and, if any person shall be so hardy as to set up a school without such allowance, he shall forfeit forty shillings to the use of the poor of the town.”

In 1718, it being found by sad experience that many towns, very able to support a grammar school, chose rather to pay their fines, the penalty was raised to thirty pounds on towns of one hundred and fifty families, forty pounds for two hundred families, and in the same proportion for two hundred and fifty or three hundred families.

In 1767, “ whereas, the encouragement of learning tends to the promotion of religion and good morals, and the establishment of liberty, civil and religious,” school districts were authorized to levy taxes to defray the charges of supporting schools, in addition to the taxes levied by the towns.

In framing the constitution of 1780, the fifth chapter of that instrument was devoted to the University at Cambridge and

encouragement of literature. The second section of that chapter is in these words.

“Wisdom and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the body of the people, being necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties ; and as these depend on spreading the opportunities and advantages of education in the various parts of the country, and among the different orders of the people ; it shall be the duty of legislatures and magistrates, in all future periods of this Commonwealth, to cherish the interests of literature and the sciences, and all seminaries of them ; especially the University at Cambridge, public schools, and grammar schools in the towns ; to encourage private societies, and public institutions with rewards and immunities, for the promotion of agriculture, arts, sciences, commerce, trades, manufactures, and a natural history of the country ; to countenance and inculcate the principles of humanity and general benevolence, public and private charity, industry and frugality, honesty and punctuality in their dealings, sincerity, good humor, and all social affections, and generous sentiments among the people.”

Under this Constitution our common school system has continued to command the frequent attention of the State Government. June 25th, 1789, an act was passed, consisting of twelve sections, and entitled “an act to provide for the instruction of youth, and for the promotion of good education.” This act sets forth, that,

“Whereas the Constitution of this Commonwealth hath declared it to be the duty of the General Court to provide for the education of youth ; and whereas a general dissemination of knowledge and virtue is necessary to the prosperity of every State, and the very existence of a Commonwealth ; it is enacted, that schools be kept in all towns according to the number of families ; and in towns of two hundred families, a grammar school ; and it is enjoined on all instructors of youth to take diligent care, and to exert their best endeavours, to impress on the minds of children and youth committed to their care and instruction, the principles of piety, justice, and a sacred regard to truth, love to their country, humanity and universal benevolence, sobriety, industry and frugality, chastity, moderation and temperance, and those other virtues which are the ornament of human society, and the basis upon which the republican constitution is structured, and to endeavour to lead those under their care into a particular understanding of the tendency of the before-mentioned virtues to preserve and

perfect a republican constitution, and to secure the blessings of liberty, as well as to promote their future happiness ; and the tendency of the opposite vices to slavery and ruin."

Several additional acts were passed, from time to time, the essential provisions of which were consolidated, with some alterations, into the Act of 1826, Chapter 143 ; and afterwards embodied in the Twenty-third Chapter of the Revised Statutes, on which, with a few short subsequent acts, and the original constitutional provision, the school system of Massachusetts now depends.

It is not to be disguised, that the progress of our Common Schools since the Revolution has not kept pace with the advancement of society generally ; but, before proceeding to discuss the present state of the system, its defects and the requisite reforms, we trust our readers will indulge us in a few remarks upon the all-important subject of Education itself ; upon which, to avoid tediousness, we promise to be brief.

What is education, such education as deserves the name ? Not the getting by rote set forms of words which may be altogether barren of profitable fruit ; no, nor barely storing the memory with the information of facts, however extensive and useful. An abundant stock of these, judiciously laid in, may doubtless prove of wonderful advantage in the after occasions of life. But education, truly and faithfully accomplished, is the full and well-proportioned developement of all a man's physical, intellectual, and moral capacities ; such as sends him into the conflict of his earthly probation, a sound mind in a sound body, to fulfil the dictates of a sound heart. Training, aptly administered to this end, fosters and confirms all virtuous dispositions, checks and finally eradicates all unworthy propensities. The scholar learns to scorn ignoble objects of pursuit, and wisely bends his undivided energies, with an ingenuous ardor, to effect the liberal purposes of a comprehensive benevolence. He places his supreme happiness in the solid satisfaction of duty well performed. He knows how to choose the right ; and, having made his election, his understanding and all his corporeal faculties, operate in their several functions in due subordination to realize his will. He is nerved for the fight, he can breast himself manfully against every assault, he will triumph victoriously over all opposition, for he feels himself strengthened to every

good word and work, both in the inner and outer man. "I call, therefore, a complete and generous education," says Milton, "that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously, all the offices both private and public, of peace and war."

Under such instruction he will grow up to understand and realize his position in the universe, and his relations to his fellow creatures, and what it is incumbent on him to be and to do, by virtue of their mutual dependencies. Society has done much for him. It has raised him above the level of the brutes, and he owes to society a return, — a large return, — vastly more than he can ever pay, though he were a Bacon or a Newton, a Lafayette or a Washington ; but his inability to repay all does not release and cancel the debt of gratitude.

There is an indefeasible obligation upon every man to do something for the world he lives in. He should ever bear it on his conscience to discharge this duty. With the blessing of God, he should say to himself, "The world shall be somewhat better that I have lived in it." He who does not say this, in sincerity and truth, is no nobler than the beasts that perish. Morally he is beneath them ; for they act up to their light, and feel no responsibility for which they are not ready to give an account, while he lives in the daily sense that his part in the world's work is unperformed. While he yields no fruit, he only cumber's God's vineyard ; and, when he is cut down, but few will mourn over him.

Far otherwise is it with him in whose daily meditations philanthropy is ever present as a governing principle. Who are the truly useful ? To whom is the world indebted for those magnificent benefactions, which have blessed millions and generations, — improvements in government, advancement in religion, and in civilization ? To whom are mankind indebted for the noiseless but resistless progress of good principles, whereby greater changes are effecting in the condition of the whole human family, than have grown out of the efforts of the mightiest conquerors, or than have followed the most renowned revolutions of empire ? To those whose moral education has fixed in their hearts permanent and actuating principles of conduct. There have been men of erudition, whose memories were libraries for the singular benefit of their associates, but whose learning died with them. There have been men of forecast and sagacity unsurpassed,

— our own times have witnessed some of them, — who, having no rule of action except their own immediate advantage, have been governed by circumstances, instead of subjecting circumstances to their own control. But those who are widely and lastingly useful, are the men upon the stability of whose moral character reliance can be safely reposed. With such the sense of duty is habitual ; and, therefore, even if they cannot boast of uncommon talents, extensive acquirements, or a broad field of action, still, as all their acts have the same tendency, their influence is always in the same direction ; and, operating silently and unseen, is the cause of meliorations in the moral tone of society, perceived after a few years by all, but understood while they are going on only by a few reflecting observers. With such, the performance of duty is pleasant, because all their desires are trained to accordance with the moral sense ; and they, therefore, do good naturally, and as of course, with less effort and internal struggle than the bad experience when they do evil.

It has sometimes been strangely questioned, whether a popular sound morality might not be the natural offspring of ignorance and delusion, and whether a refined education did not weaken in the soul the sanctions of religion, and relax those bonds which hold together the compact of society. But were it not blasphemy against the God of truth to doubt, that the illumination of the intellect with the radiance of wisdom infuses into the heart the love of virtue ? Goodness is the imprint which the sense of truth stamps indelibly upon the character. All noble thoughts are types of noble action. From the contemplation, to the imitation of ideal excellence, the transition is natural and easy. The divine light of moral science sheds a clear distinctness over our true interests, and shows the path of duty marked in a bold outline. Before its purifying beams, all evil thoughts and low desires vanish as the noonday splendor dissipates the mists of the valley. The well-educated man stands before the world the image of his Maker, having attained as nearly as may be to the perfection of his moral nature. He exhibits not merely a speculative but an active virtue, and all beholders are constrained to confess that wisdom is justified of her children.

If indeed the security of the public morality reposed on the public ignorance, if delusion were the palladium of our well-being, miserable would be the condition of humanity ;

for ignorance is of the earth, earthy, and must soon pass away. But the progress and prosperity of our race rest on no temporary and precarious reliance. When delusion has died of old age, truth will still flourish in eternal vigor. She renews her youth like the eagle. When to mortal eyes she appears vanishing for ever, behold, like the young sun rejoicing in his course, she rises again. She is not of created things, and is therefore exempt from their destiny. God's well-beloved daughter knows neither age nor decay. Before the work of creation began, she was with the Father of all things; and, when Time shall have ceased to be, she will stand before his throne, and still bask in the living light of the ineffable presence.

It is not merely poetry, but the ultimate result of all moral argument, that "true self-love, and social, are the same." "This is the foundation of all human wisdom," says Le Père Buffier, "the source from which all virtues, purely natural, flow, the general principle of all morals, and of all human society, that while I live with other men, who equally with myself desire to be happy, I must try to discover the means of increasing my own happiness, by augmenting that of others." Cicero regarded it as the basis of ethics, "*ut eadem sit utilitas uniuscujusque et universorum.*" A higher authority than Cicero has established a whole code of duty upon the maxim, "Do ye therefore unto others as ye would that others should do unto you."

It is impossible therefore that the study even of temporary interests should derogate from the just influence of moral principles, at least while conducted on broad and comprehensive views; since there is no contrariety between them, but rather a strict conformity, the more evident as those interests are better understood.

But it is not to be forgotten, that the cultivation of the intellect is but a part, and not the most important part of a good and perfect education. The preëminent worth of moral cultivation should be strongly impressed on every parent and teacher. With a little care, many salutary precepts may be instilled into the minds of youth, such as shall deserve to be treasured up among the guiding maxims of their lives, and meditated upon as the fundamental principles of practical wisdom. These, being firmly rooted in their memories, will help them to form solid and substantial characters, which in

after life will stand the test of every trial. Correct habits must be acquired, the sovereignty of conscience over the whole man must be established, the power of self-reliance must be gained, and the sentiment of independence nourished. Imbued with virtuous principles, and having learned to prize above all price and to preserve at every hazard the testimony of an approving conscience, the youth goes into the world armed at all points. To gird him with this panoply should be the endeavour of his moral education.

Almost the best defence, at least one of the strongest safeguards of morality, is the feeling of independence. If the world thinks that to be right which you think to be wrong, follow your own opinion, and preserve your self-respect. Consider that you would rather be honorable and despised, than be honored and despicable. If the world holds you in light esteem because it misunderstands your character, every mark of disrespect which it bestows upon you is a certificate of the beauty and excellence of those virtues in which it erroneously supposes you to be deficient. But if the world, while it knows your character, disesteems you, because the principles that regulate your conduct are above the received standard of morality, and it is incapable of appreciating them, retire within your own bosom and enjoy that serene consciousness of rectitude, which can sustain undisturbed the hoarse clamor of popular invective. He who has the fortitude and the constancy to do this, and to go on steadily in the path of duty visible to his eyes alone, experiences not merely that tranquil satisfaction which a sense of obligation fulfilled brings always with it, but a loftier, nobler, prouder pleasure, even the most exalted of which our nature is susceptible here on earth, that unalloyed felicity which is the prerogative of integrity invincible amid allurements or peril. The stern and solemn joy which bore the martyrs triumphant and exulting through their trials, which supported them and gave them the victory over shame and anguish and death itself, is the due reward of original and peculiar virtue, of virtue manifested in spite of temptation, — in spite of what is still harder to be resisted, ridicule, opprobrium, and scorn.

He who is educated as all the youth of a Republic should be, his virtuous dispositions corroborated into fixed habits, his knowledge of his own powers and capacities perfected into a modest but confident self-reliance, his heart steeled

with the inflexible determination to guard and preserve unviolated the sanctity of his own self-approval, while an enlightened conscience with a distinct and unequivocal bidding calls him onward and upward in the path of a purer morality, though the blandishments of fashionable example draw him backward and downward with the witchery of sympathy, will never yield to the seduction, nor be disobedient to the dictates of that monitor whose precepts are not set at nought without punishment. He will not follow the multitude to do evil against light and conviction. The mean and cowardly abandonment of principle for precedent, the despicable dereliction of that course, straight though solitary, in which the very instinct of a noble spirit urges him on, never suggests itself to his contemplation as within the range of possible alternatives. He will not sacrifice that pure delight which neither the smiles of the world can give, nor their frowns take away. He will not surrender himself an unwilling and a miserable slave to the tyranny of custom, a servitude which becomes every day more and more intolerable, which exacts compliances still more and more degrading, which never loosens its hold till it has reduced the spirit, created to be free, to a grovelling dependence on the decisions and caprices of others.

With youth so educated, we should have none of that dissipation, without relish, endured, under a secret disgust, for fashion's sake ; none of that servility of manners, the corruption engendered in the dotage of feudalism, preposterously imported into the wholesome simplicity of a vigorous republic ; no prevarication in business, no equivocation in professions, no cant in criticism, no shuffling in politics, no temporizing in morals, no hypocrisy in religion. We should live in an honest and straight-forward world. Far distant though the dawning of this millennium may be, it is none the less desirable to hasten it onward ; and though it were taken for certain, that neither we nor our children should ever enjoy the full fruition of so blessed a state, we should none the less strive for the nearest approach that we can attain to it.

What we may reasonably hope from the diffusion of education may in some degree be estimated by observing what it is that education has done for us already. It has constituted the essential differences between different men, and also between different nations. It is the correct understanding of

his own true interests that makes one man happily virtuous, and it is because he is not thus enlightened that another becomes miserably vicious. In one nation, brutalizing superstition, abject poverty, and veneration for ancient abuses, forbid improvement, and keep the people stationary in the first stages of their natural progress ; so that generation after generation drags out its wretched existence, toiling barely to support life and to secure a few of the baser animal gratifications, because no ray of knowledge has pierced the thick darkness which envelopes them, to discover to them any more substantial good, or to enlarge the narrow horizon which limits their experience, their desires, their hopes, and their pleasures ; while, in another nation, each succeeding generation, inheriting the full capacity for happiness which its predecessors possessed, opens for itself new sources of enjoyment, till it reaches the most refined and exalted, diffuses their blessings till they become accessible to countless multitudes, and thus purifies their passions, advances them in virtue, and raises them in the scale of moral and intellectual being, because divine science has illuminated their minds, and has shown them the inducement, the means, and the practicability of being happy. One nation grovels in slavery, because it does not know its rights ; another preserves but a small portion of liberty, because it knows not how to defend what it has obtained, or to regain what it has lost ; while another exults in the unrestrained exercise of its energies, because it knows what freedom is, and knows how to value and to guard it. We have seen, from their legislative declarations, that our fathers were duly sensible of this great truth, and that therefore, anticipating the evils which ignorance would inevitably bring upon their posterity, they established the common-school system, — an institution singularly well calculated to perpetuate general information, — in the hope that we should not suffer the flame of knowledge to expire, but rather keep alive the sacred torch, and hand it down from age to age with undiminished lustre.

To show the whole extent of the change produced by education, and to exhibit it in the most striking light, we might take that bare, forked, unsophisticated animal, the human savage, examine his condition, and mark the slow degrees by which he rises. His instincts are less clear, his senses less acute, his strength, and swiftness, and vigor less extraordi-

nary than those of several of the quadrupeds. Necessity drives him to observe the qualities of things, and to take advantage of such as he can make serviceable to his purposes. Nature seems at first sight to have treated him like a step-son. She sets him down upon the barren waste, naked and houseless, yet needing clothing and shelter ; without swiftness to overtake the herds that wander over the pastures, or force to conquer, or weapons to defend himself against, the fierce monsters that prey upon them ; in short, destitute, weak, and helpless. Knowledge gives him clothing, shelter, food, and tools. With tools he constructs machines, with machines he manufactures comforts and luxuries, and with all these he accumulates wealth, for his own future enjoyment, and to bequeath to his children after him. He establishes governments to protect his life and wealth ; under whose wing he prosecutes his researches and improvements, till he considers him ignorant whom earlier ages would have called wise, and him poor whom the first stages of society would have styled rich.

But, without insisting upon so broad a contrast as that between man sunk in the brutal stupor of absolute ignorance, and man elevated to the highest refinement of Christian civilization, let us consider the effect of the sudden diffusion of information in the latter part of the fifteenth century.

So soon as knowledge began to shed her beams over benighted Europe, the beneficial effect of her influence was apparent. A spirit of innovation, a spirit full of hope, though sometimes ill directed, was abroad before the breaking out of the Reformation. That great convulsion, though it did not free faith, at once, from all its absurdities, and though it, at first, only restored reason to a divided empire, yet delivered the intellect from shackles more galling than any that remain ; from venerable superstitions and inveterate prejudices. Those which remain are shaken, and totter, now that so many collateral errors which supported them are overthrown. Those, which have sprung up since, are temporary and scarcely to be feared.

The excitement, which the discussion of questions, in which every man felt himself so deeply concerned, was naturally calculated to generate, the political considerations with which they were complicated tended still more to heighten. The impulse, which the intellect then received, carried it far be-

yond the intention or expectation of the movers. We can form some idea of its influence by tracing out its ramifications into all the controversies, theological, metaphysical, moral, and political of the present day. We shall not overrate its importance, if we ascribe to it all the superiority which the Protestant nations, as a body, may claim over the Catholic. In learning and in refinement, in wealth and in enterprise, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, in the latter half of the fifteenth century, were in advance of Great Britain, Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, and the other now Protestant states of Germany. But how stands the comparison subsequently? Their history since that time has been that of the rise of the Protestant, and the decline of the Catholic nations; and for this no other sufficient reason can be assigned than the comparative freedom of thought and of speech in the one, and the repose and constraint of the faculties in the other. But the contrast, startling as it is, does not exhibit the full measure of what we owe to the Reformation. Even the Catholic nations have been compelled in self-defence to cultivate literature and the sciences; even they have been led to reform abuses, and finally, in a most praiseworthy degree, to practise tolerance; so that we must pass to the credit of the Reformation not only the superiority of the Protestant nations, but also much that is excellent in the conduct of the Catholics; and whatever good the Reformation may have effected is to be primarily attributed to the diffusion of knowledge among the people.

If we examine the progress, which those occupations on which the greater part of mankind depend for their subsistence have made in modern times, we shall find the same cause operating here. Not merely the increase of knowledge, but the diffusion of knowledge generally among the people, has produced most of the phenomena of our present situation.

Agriculture was formerly carried on in so slovenly and improvident a manner, that terrible famines frequently devastated countries, which then contained not half the population they now support in plenty. Those who tilled the soil had no immediate personal interest in the profit or loss of the harvest. The land was in the hands of the hereditary nobility, and there it would have remained, if what, in Europe, are called the lower classes, had continued in ignorance. But, since the diffusion of knowledge has brought

about the Reformation, the independence and freedom of America, the French Revolution, the downfall of the feudal system, and the consequent improvement in the condition of the laboring classes, agriculture is carried on, in several nations of the world, by those who reap the benefit of the product. It is no longer monopolized by lords, nor cultivated by slaves. In those countries where the land is in the possession of an intelligent and independent yeomanry, it has become a garden of fertility. The dense population of England and of Holland, and the thirty millions of France, import but little food, and yet are better fed in years of scarcity than the scanty and beggarly population of the same countries three centuries and a half ago.

Manufactures also owe their developement to the growing importance of the new classes, to whom knowledge has given wealth, and to the influence they have had in altering the habits and wants of the old exclusive proprietors. While the feudal baron lived in his castle, consumed the harvest of his domains to maintain state in his hall, and devoted his surplus revenue, if he had any, to service in the wars, or to quarrels with his neighbours, manufactures were few and simple ; but since the class, having numerous wants and ample means of gratifying them, has been so vastly increased, Philosophy has employed herself in the service of the useful arts, the whole force of chemistry has been brought to bear upon the processes of manufacture, and ingenuity now invents more machinery for cheapening and perfecting operations, in a single year, than formerly would have sufficed to be the boast of a whole century. The consequence of this change has been the amazing facility and rapidity with which manufacturing industry multiplies its productions ; so that articles, which, fifty years ago, were esteemed luxuries, are now ranked among the ordinary comforts of life, and the daily labor of a working man will now earn for him a reasonable supply of many accommodations and pleasures, which, before the mechanical age commenced, were only within the reach of the wealth of princes.

Internal intercourse, the convenience of travel and transportation, are almost altogether of modern growth. Savages have no roads, and yet without roads it is impossible to make any great progress in civilization. You may have mines of coal in one county, mines of the best iron ore in

the next county, and both be useless for want of vehicles and means of transportation. A bad road, such as the roads in Poland at the present day, or such as the best roads in England two hundred years ago, doubles the price of a bulky article, like wheat, in thirty or forty miles' carriage. Of course, with such roads, there could be little traffic. Now, thanks to the genius of Clinton and Fulton, bulky articles, such as pork and flour, are furnished to the consumer, more than a thousand miles from the producer, cheaper than they could be raised in his immediate neighbourhood; and the cost is equalized over a whole vast continent. The improvement in travelling is not the least of the miracles which steam has wrought. In 1703, Prince George had occasion to go from Windsor to Petworth, about forty miles. An attendant describes the journey. "We set out at six in the morning, by torch light, to go to Petworth, and did not get out of the coaches, save only when we were overturned or stuck fast in the mire, till we arrived at our journey's end. 'T was a hard service for the Prince, to sit fourteen hours in the coach that day, without eating any thing, &c." The rest of the account is equally dismal. Now, by the potent urgency of steam, one rushes from London to Liverpool almost with the speed of the wind. Before the Revolution, the journey between New York and Boston was quite a serious undertaking; now you take your tea in New York, enjoy a night's sound sleep, and breakfast in Boston the next morning.

The transmission of intelligence by letters and newspapers is one of the most remarkable results of modern information. Nothing important takes place in Arkansas or Wisconsin, that is not known, as fast as steam can carry it, from Georgia to Maine. Nearly three thousand newspaper establishments disseminate it, and more than thirteen thousand post-offices forward and distribute it, receiving more than four millions of dollars a year for the postage of letters. These facts could not exist except where the power of reading and writing is universal. Alfred the Great complained, that, from the Humber to the Thames, there was not a priest who understood the liturgy in his mother tongue, and from the Thames to the sea they were still more ignorant. As late as the fourteenth century, Du Guesclin, constable of France, the greatest man in the state, and one of the greatest men of his age, could neither read nor write. Of course, neither Alfred, nor Du Guesclin,

nor their countrymen, patronized either newspapers or post-offices ; yet how much of civilization is due to the prompt and general intercommunication of ideas, it would be difficult to determine. It is in fact the application of steam to the process of thought, transmitting a train of reasoning commenced in one mind, to be completed in another, though a continent may intervene. The effect of this division of labor, and multiplication of laborers, in the intellectual world, can hardly be over-estimated.

While ignorance confined men's views within narrow limits, they scarcely dreamed of appropriating, and bringing into common use, any thing which they must resort to distant countries to obtain. Before science had brought navigation to a higher state of perfection than it ever obtained among the ancients, it could not have ventured across pathless oceans ; since the discovery of America, it has changed the condition of the world. It has been the chief source of the great accumulations of capital in modern times ; it has been the great promoter of civilization, and has done more than any other agent to bring about that community of interest and of feeling, which is beginning to unite nations in bonds more durable than the fragile treaties framed by jealous politicians. Through its benignant power, the blessings, which Providence had allotted to one region, are participated in by all ; and climates, soils, and countries have not been diversified in vain.

The New World has received from the Old the invaluable gift of a noble race of men, more civilized and better informed than ever were colonists before. They came in the fulness of time ; they have established here, where they were unembarrassed by the obstacles, which still retard the progress of their brethren left behind, those free institutions which are the admiration of mankind, and which keep alive the hope of the almost desponding patriot, who, on the other side of the Atlantic, sends up his ardent aspirations to Heaven that he may enjoy such liberty with such protection. The New World is repaying to the Old, richly repaying, the debt she owes her, by the example she holds out for imitation ; an example whose value cannot now be estimated, but which the future philosopher and historian will discuss, as well as record. Not the least brilliant trait in this example is our common-school system, which ensures the perpetuity of that

wisdom and virtue, which are the only safe foundation of republics, an institution which the Prussian monarchy has not hesitated to adopt, and in some respects improve. Let Massachusetts take heed, that Prussia does not leave her behind in the career of improvement.

The aggrandizement of the whole society, as a body politic, is not now so much the object of good government as to afford the fairest opportunities for the perfection of the individual character. Having observed those momentous revolutions, which the dissemination of knowledge has effected through the world at large, let us study the influence of education upon the individual.

The laws of hygiene having been first obeyed, the objects of education are twofold ; to enlighten and instruct the understanding, and to perfect the moral sense and form the heart. The first of these is subordinate in importance, and subsidiary in purpose, to the second, because the intellect is only the agent for carrying into effect the determinations of the will. If these determinations are righteous, it will be well for mankind when vigorous and cultivated mental powers are subservient to their sway ; if, on the other hand, they are iniquitous, it is a deplorable and a wide-felt calamity, that talents and information should be employed to accomplish them. A bold bad man is an enemy to be feared, and watched, and hedged in on every side. A man possessing and abusing the highest order of faculties, natural and acquired, should be shown less countenance, and command less respect, than an ignoramus or an *imbecile* ; for all the deference paid to his formidable eminence is so much homage to the power of evil. Whatever degree of influence is yielded to him, so far the social interests and the public and private virtues are endangered, or, it should rather be said, must necessarily suffer. Knowledge, then, like all other power, may prove a blessing or a curse to him who wields it, and to those who experience its pervading, overcoming strength, operating upon their condition, circumstances, and character.

Knowledge is good or bad, according as it is well or ill used ; and how it shall be used depends upon the moral sense, the product mostly of the moral education. We cannot say of a confirmed morality that it is good or bad, according to the amount of knowledge one possesses with it. Morality is good of itself, whether one be well-informed or

altogether unlearned. One may hold all the truth in unrighteousness, and deserve the more to be condemned because he holds it; but, if any one does the will of his Maker, if he does always what is just and right, though ignorant and humble and despised, he has chosen that good part of a complete education, which cannot be taken away from him, and without which all the rest of the most finished education that genius could conceive, would be only the worthless adorning of a base, superficial, unsubstantial hollow-heartedness, covered with an outward show of false pretences, but destitute of any fixed, internal, permanent principle of conduct. It follows, that morality is to be regarded as the basis and foundation of the character, and that, to instil into the youthful breast sound moral principles,—principles of benevolence, uprightness, justice, and honor,—and to confirm and guard these principles with such belief, impressions, and habits, as shall make their stability through all possible vicissitudes of life almost infallibly certain, should be the primary object, the grand end and aim, of a well-directed education. In accordance with this design, and as contributing most effectually to secure it, intellectual cultivation should not be neglected; but it must never be forgotten, that the means are valuable only in so far as they conduce to the end, and that knowledge, a treasure above all price in the service of philanthropy, becomes an inexhaustible fountain of woe, when, pressed into the employment of vice, its natural tendency is perverted, and its mighty, effective energies are devoted to the infliction of evil.

These general considerations are quite sufficient of themselves to satisfy us with what fundamental views we ought to set about the education of our children. But perhaps the conclusion to which we have already arrived will be impressed more deeply on our minds, if we examine a little in detail into the ordinary consequences of moral character. Let us cast a penetrating glance through the innumerable varieties of moral disposition and of external circumstances in the world about us, and inquire whose lot and situation are on the whole desirable, and whose are earnestly to be deprecated. It will be easy to decide, whether happiness, usefulness, and genuine wisdom are not uniformly to be found associated with a pure morality. If it is apparent, undeniable, that they are so, let us then ask ourselves, whether we can begin

too early, or labor too assiduously, to establish broad, solid, and lasting foundations for a virtuous character.

Who are the truly happy? Whatever be the enjoyments in which we make happiness to consist, it will still be a demonstrable truth, that morality furnishes the only plain and certain road to its attainment.

If we wish to derive from the indulgence of our senses the greatest aggregate of satisfaction they can afford, wealth supplies the means. How can wealth be accumulated? Various as are the expedients of different men, one general rule applies to them all, a rule so universally recognised that it is condensed into a proverb, never doubted by any man endowed with common sense, the rule that "honesty is the best policy."

In the infancy of society, when the right of property was but little respected, the advantage of honesty as a matter of policy merely, to the few who practised it, must have been small, compared to the benefit of a strict adherence to that virtue in times when it is generally practised and universally professed. Still, in the rudest savage state, a code of virtue originates in the necessities of men's situation; simple, yet soon, from its obvious utility, approved by all, and enforced by public opinion. The necessity of good faith in the world was a fact felt to be real as soon as human intercourse began. The heathen nations, though they abandoned themselves to the practice of many gross vices, were so sensible of the beauty and excellence of virtue, that they applauded philosophers who taught a morality almost as strict as that of modern Christendom; and so correct were the decisions of their consciences, as to draw from an Apostle the observation, that the Gentiles, being without law, were a law unto themselves. In the Roman commonwealth, during the earlier period of its history, the sterner, and what may properly be called the more republican virtues, were more severely practised and held in higher honor than they have ever been among any modern nation, from the strong conviction rooted in the breasts of that people of their expediency, or rather their necessity for the gratification of the master-passion, the desire of aggrandizing the Roman power. As society has become more civilized, it has been seen more plainly, that mutual confidence is the only tie that can bind mankind together in communities; and that a general observance of the

laws of morality is the only basis upon which mutual confidence can be durably established.

He who acts in defiance of these principles is treated as a common enemy. Such being the consent of all men in civilized society, while they all agree in the grand outlines of general morality, and not only believe, but feel, each one, a personal and immediate interest in their binding obligation, he who contravenes them sets himself in controversy with the rest of his species. He sets himself at war also with universal interests, and with immutable principles. He might as well oppose the order of physical nature, and think to evade the law of gravitation, as attempt to move counter to the elements of civil society ; in either case, and just as infallibly in the one as in the other, the result must be his entire discomfiture.

Compare the general results of opposite systems of conduct. Of the artificers of their own fortunes, rarely can one be found who has built himself up by the force of a superior intellect in defiance of the obligations of morality. If here and there you may meet with a single unprincipled and profligate example of undeserved success, who seems to be basking in the sunshine of prosperity, suspend your judgment awhile, and mark well the issue. Almost invariably, some sudden catastrophe, the consequence of his violation of the principles of rectitude, arrests him in his brief career, and overwhelms him with calamity. But of the same class of self-made men, fortunately under our republican institutions a very numerous class, thousands and tens of thousands have risen, not by strength of talents, but by an unexceptionable course of direct and upright dealing in all their concerns. Turn to the other side of the account, and who people our prisons and houses of correction ? Men not wanting in talents, but of unbalanced minds, and irregular and defective developement of character. Men born with capacities for greatness and goodness, but wrecked and ruined in the outset, because their moral education has been neglected or conducted on false principles. Men mighty to perpetuate evil, to corrupt and to contaminate others, but imbecile for virtuous action, because their vilest passions, left unchecked when they should have been subdued, have acquired a vigor and energy which conscience cannot curb nor prudence restrain, and have assumed the complete mastery over their

whole nature. The inmates of prisons make rapid progress in all the mysteries of wickedness ; yet the ablest of those pupils of sin, once discharged from their dismal abode, are the soonest to return ; so little do tact and skill avail an individual in a struggle with the universal interests of society, and so surely do vicious habits and propensities, fastening upon him like an incubus which cannot be shaken off, bear down their victim with a pressure under which he cannot rise. These men employ talents, oftentimes, and exercise an ingenuity and an application, the tenth part of which would have been sufficient to insure success in any prudent course of virtuous enterprise, but which, misdirected by the impulses of a bad heart, earn for them nothing but poverty, wretchedness and just contempt, and only sink them deeper in the abyss of despair.

Thus much of the influence on our condition in life of moral character, the product of moral education, treating only of extreme cases ; yet the majority, who occupy intermediate stations, are subject to the same laws. Among us, few are absolutely destitute without some fault of their own, though multitudes suffer under privations, if not extreme want, who are honest and worthy citizens, or, at least, never guilty of any heinous crime. The distress of far the greater number of these may be justly attributed to the neglect of what some consider to be moralities of lesser obligation, — such as industry, punctuality, and frugality. Though idleness, habitual procrastination, and prodigality, do not ordinarily pass under the denomination of crimes, yet they are morally wrong, and always bring after them heavy punishments. They are, moreover, the most prolific sources of intemperance, and intemperance is the parent of every woe and crime. A correct moral education, therefore, would remove most of the causes of poverty, as well as of much greater evils, by making men industrious, prompt, punctual, frugal, and temperate.

When we speak of the beneficial effect of such an education on the pecuniary circumstances of the next generation, we are far from intimating that there are not other interests involved of much more momentous importance. Heaven forbid, that morality should ever be dissevered from religious motives, and debased to a sordid calculation of profit and loss ; bereft of that life-giving spirit, which elevates and en-

nobles it, which extends its sphere beyond the narrow confines of self, and pushes its prospective vision farther than time can limit or than space can bound.

Wealth is not only fleeting ; it is neither the sole, nor the best foundation on which to rest our hopes of happiness, even while it lasts. Respectability of character is of far higher value, and much less likely to be lost through the caprices of fortune. It would be a waste of words to show, that an unspotted moral life must confer respectability, and that respect derived from whatever qualities, without this, must be short-lived and of little worth. Equally self-evident is it, that those who live in the constant practice of moral duty, though wealth and respect should both desert them, have internal resources for consolation of which they cannot be deprived. He who possesses a conscience void of offence is passing rich, whether he has much or little of this world's goods. He who is not afraid to be alone with his Maker, is independent of the smiles or frowns of the world. The sunshine of prosperity, the tempest of adversity, neither seduce nor terrify his steadfast soul. The basis on which his happiness is fixed, the immovable, imperturbable basis of a good conscience, he owes to a good moral education.

For the purposes of such an education as we have described, our common schools are as yet, it must be confessed, lamentably deficient. The virtuous impulses which swell the heart of this great nation were hardly imparted there. The schools have done much for the intellect, furnishing the rudiments of knowledge, which their pupils have improved afterwards. Indirectly, they have done much for sound morals, because all good learning has a wholesome influence ; but their direct action upon moral character has never been all that it should be. Parental instruction and guidance have formed the hearts of this generation ; and, where these have been wanting, youth have been left to be the sport of casual associations and accidental circumstances. Of course, in the forming period of life, much must always depend on right beginnings ; our reliance is mainly, in the first instance, upon maternal care, and afterwards on both the parents. But the school must not stand neutral ; it must be brought forward, and made to fulfil its part, as the most powerful auxiliary.

Universal education, a higher education, such as shall put to shame not past ages only, but the present, must be provided for. The want is felt, and will not longer be endured

without a strenuous effort to meet it. The philanthropist, the patriot, and the Christian feel the urgent need of a generous developement of the noblest powers and faculties, and the richest affections of our common nature, through that dull mass of humanity in whom they now slumber inert and almost lifeless. The refinement of taste, which, without intellectual and moral cultivation, ends only in elegant imbecility ; financial prosperity, which, if not pressed into the service of virtue, may be prostituted to engender corruption ; absorbing political interests, which convulse the Union to its centre, and which unhallowed ambition may pervert to the destruction of freedom, all these are insignificant, are as nothing and less than nothing, compared with this paramount necessity. The cry of the age is for true education. Its advent is longed for, and prayed for, and believed in. It seems just bursting above our moral horizon, radiant with knowledge and virtue, shedding light into the understanding, and pouring warmth into the heart, a genial sun whose beams are for the healing of the nations. Glorious visions of future progress, and blessed omens of their coming consummation throng upon the soul, and fill it with comfort and joy, when the evidences of the earnest awakening of mankind, under the vivifying and quickening influences of this bright-dawning era, present themselves to our view.

How is the great work to be accomplished ? What are our means of levelling the fortifications, impregnable since the creation of the world, in which ignorance and vice have entrenched themselves ? Hope, which was Cæsar's only portion when he went into Gaul ; faith in man's high nature and destiny ; the ardent enthusiasm which the grand object to be attained inspires ; the unquenchable zeal already active, and which will never rest, nor pause, till the victory is achieved, and darkness abdicates her narrowed empire.

It is manifest, that the people themselves must be the immediate agents in the revolution. Impressed with its usefulness, aware that the time has come for a seasonable effort, prepared to submit to sacrifices, and determined to overcome difficulties, it is in their power to begin and complete in a few years a wonderful change, extending to the entire regeneration of society. The humblest laborer in the undertaking will reap, in his own personal share of the benefit, an adequate remuneration for all his toil ; while the loftiest ambition may well be allured to earn and win the enduring honor of so

brilliant and dazzling an enterprise. Ignorance will not fall an easy prey ; he has survived many attacks, he has grown old in dominion, he will die with harness at his back ; but perish he must, if history teaches any sure lesson, if there be any thing certain in philosophy, if the steady march of improvement be not a dream, if the omnipotence of truth be not a fable, if our kind Father did not create us to be from age to age the bondmen of error. None doubt it, save the stony-ground hearers of nature's teachings, in whose minds the experience of the world is barren of consequences.

When the enlightened and the virtuous fully realize their responsibility in this matter, as the signs of the times convince us they do in some good degree already, public opinion will imperatively demand a more elevated standard of youthful education. A legislative expression of this demand, even if government went no further, would carry with it great weight. Such an expression emanated from the legislature of Massachusetts in the Act of April 20th, 1837.

By that act a Board of Education was established, having the general superintendence of the common-school system of the State, and required to report to the legislature all their doings, with such observations as their experience and reflection may suggest, upon the condition and efficiency of our system of popular education, and the most practicable means of improving and extending it. Their first Annual Report was submitted on the 1st of February last, and is now before the public, including the first Report of their Secretary, in a pamphlet of seventy-five pages.

Individuals may contribute to raise the popular standard of education, by their direct personal influence in society, by written discussions of the subject, in the newspapers and other periodical as well as occasional publications, and through the reports of school committees, which are, by the Act of April 11th, 1838, required to be made annually, "designating particular improvements and defects in the methods or means of education, and stating such facts and suggestions in relation thereto, as in their opinion will best promote the interests and increase the usefulness of said schools," and to be read in open town-meeting, or printed and distributed for the use of the inhabitants. By delivering or promoting public lectures, and by assisting in the formation and management of associations for collecting and diffusing information on the

subject, or by coöperating with the Board of Education in its efforts for this purpose, or, though last, not least, by furnishing pecuniary means, the good work may be hastened on.

The Act of 12th April, 1837, authorizes an expenditure of thirty dollars for the first year, and ten dollars for every subsequent year, by each school district in the Commonwealth, for the purchase of a district school library. These sums, small as they are, will be found, in the present economy of printing, amply sufficient for the object. In a very few years, they will command a library of more than two hundred volumes, which, if judiciously selected, may be made to contain more profitable and instructive reading than is now to be found within the limits of the district, in at least four-fifths of the whole number now in the State. We speak advisedly upon this point. We have at this moment beside us, a pile of from sixty to seventy volumes, selected with a view to this object, mostly duodecimos, of two or three hundred pages; and we know many gentlemen in the learned professions, of good estate, and residing in our large towns, whose libraries do not include half the amount of really valuable matter. It is understood, that a neat edition of fifty volumes, approved by the Board of Education as suitable for common-school libraries, is about to be published and sold at a very moderate rate, plainly and substantially bound, and placed in cases well adapted for convenient transportation, and afterwards to serve as the permanent place of deposit.

It is highly desirable that every school district should avail itself of this provision of the law. These books, being fitted for common use, would pass from the scholar into the family, and increase the interest of parents in the better education of their children, by giving them new views of its value.

Much good might unquestionably be effected by the publication of a periodical journal, of which the exclusive object should be to promote the cause of common-school education. Such a journal, devoted to collecting and diffusing information on this subject, to the discussion of the numerous important questions which belong to it, to the formation of a sound and intelligent public opinion, and the excitement of a warm and energetic public sentiment, might render incalculable service. The Board of Education are decidedly of opinion, that a journal of this description would be the most valuable auxiliary which could be devised to carry into exe-

cution the enlightened policy of the government in legislating for the improvement of the schools, and they indulge a sanguine hope that it will shortly be established, under such auspices as will go far to insure its success.

After all, the great work of reformation is to be effected in the schools themselves, and in the qualifications of the teachers more especially. One serious obstacle in the way of this improvement is, the little interest taken by the most enlightened part of the community, we speak it with regret, in the condition of the common schools, from the circumstance that their own children are receiving education in private schools at their own expense. This naturally leads to a remissness and neglect, which can by no means be justified, on the part of those who are most strongly bound by every consideration to concern themselves in the improvement of education. The number of scholars in private schools appears by the returns to be twenty-seven thousand two hundred and sixty-six, while the whole number of children in the State, between the ages of four and sixteen years, stands in the returns, one hundred and seventy-seven thousand and fifty-three. From the nature of our political institutions, these thirty thousand will not control the political destiny of the hundred and eighty thousand, thirty years hence, but just the reverse. The five-sixths will fix the standard of taste, of morality, and of general conduct, to which the one-sixth will conform, and above which very few only, with infinite labor, can raise themselves. The five-sixths will possess the legislative authority, elect the executive, and thereby fill the judiciary, according to their own notions of expediency and right. They are to have, then, the disposal of property, life, and liberty for their generation, and are so to mould and modify the institutions of their country as powerfully to influence, for good or evil, the generation that shall come after them. Could they be left, as happily they cannot be, to grow up in political and moral profligacy, in the unrestrained indulgence of their bad passions, an individual, or a class of men, of superior wealth and education, would be merely at their mercy, a feather upon a stormy sea. No man is independent of the public immediately about him. He is elevated by its good influences, even though his early education was defective. He is debased by the daily spectacle and contact of debasement, and, though fitted for better things, generally

sinks into the surrounding mass of corruption. If there be any who are deaf to the voice of patriotism, philanthropy, and duty, let them at least regard the welfare of their own offspring. The public opinion of our times is the moral atmosphere which we all breathe in common. If it be wholesome, it invigorates and sustains us ; if poisonous, we all languish, and the feeble perish. How imperative the obligation, and grateful the task to preserve its purity ; how fatal its contamination, and how censurable is their supineness through whose fault we are put in peril.

We are all embarked in one bottom, and must sink or swim together. Will not the sharp-sighted look to it, that the ship be sea-worthy, and preclude betimes avoidable dangers ?

The amount paid for tuition in private schools, for one-sixth of the children of the State, is three hundred and twenty-eight thousand dollars ; while the amount raised by taxes for the education of the other five-sixths in public schools is four hundred and sixty-five thousand, and the amount voluntarily contributed to the public schools is forty-eight thousand dollars. If these sums were added together, and the whole eight or nine hundred thousand dollars were judiciously applied to common-school education, it cannot be doubted, that all the children might receive a higher order of instruction than now falls to the lot of the favored sixth part.

The value of the annual products of the industry of Massachusetts is about one hundred millions of dollars, of which less than one per cent. is appropriated to the education of children, and less than ten per cent. is saved at the end of the year to be added to previous accumulations which form the permanent capital of the State. If two per cent. of this annual product were devoted to education, is it not probable, that the product itself would be greatly enlarged, and a better economy introduced into the expenditure of it, so that this addition to the permanent capital might be much more rapid ? We do not doubt, that the best education within the power of every town in this Commonwealth would in thirty years' time double the rate at which wealth increases.

If private schools were discountenanced, and those who now support them would turn their attention to the improvement of our common schools, the additional funds turned into this channel would be but a small part of the benefit derived

from the alteration. Those who set the highest value on education, and are determined at all costs to secure its blessings to their own children, instead of standing aloof from the general concerns, as too many of them now do, would be foremost in their zeal for the district schools, acting on committees, visiting the schools, selecting the teachers, advising and assisting them, contributing to their support, and to the erection of better houses, and the purchase of better furniture, apparatus, and libraries. There would also be thrown into the district and town schools a class of scholars more thoroughly educated already at the private schools, whose example would give a quickening impulse to emulation ; and, as those parents who have been willing to pay for private tuition are generally those who take most pains with their children at home, these children would continue to impart a good influence to the rest of the school, even after the immediate effect of the first infusion. A combined effort will produce a wonderful improvement. The district school in the central village of the town will no longer be, as it often is, the poorest in its whole territory, but it will be elevated to the rank of a model for the rest, and they will all gladly profit by the opportunity for imitation.

As soon as those who have withdrawn their children, because they were dissatisfied with the character of our common schools, come again to take a personal interest in their prosperity, there will be an active demand for better teachers. As soon as the fund now diverted to private schools is restored to this legitimate purpose, the means will be at hand for commanding the services of a higher order of teachers. It is notorious, that the small compensation paid in our public schools will not, as a general fact, induce men of talents and learning to take charge of them. The best instructors seek higher salaries in the private schools. But additional compensation will draw them back into the public service. The private schools, which would be surrendered for an energetic reform in the whole system, would in part supply the demand for better teachers. But there are in Massachusetts only eight hundred and fifty-four private schools and academies, while the aggregate number of teachers, male and female, employed in the public schools, either in summer or winter, is five thousand nine hundred and sixty-one. Besides, academies for the instruction of such youth as wished to

pursue the higher branches of learning, after completing the first stages of their education in the common schools, would not be diminished in number, though they would certainly be increased in excellence and efficiency, by the proposed reformation. Nor is it to be disguised, that many private teachers are no better qualified than those now employed by the public, so that there still remain considerably over five thousand instructors to be properly qualified for their task. It is obvious, that an extensive demand for well-educated teachers cannot at present be satisfied ; there is no supply ; but there must be a supply provided, and that forthwith.

We most cordially concur in the remarks of the Reverend Dr. Channing, in his address at the Odeon, on the 28th of February, 1837.

“ We need an institution for the formation of better teachers ; and, until this step is taken, we can make no important progress. The most crying want in this Commonwealth is the want of accomplished teachers. We boast of our schools, but our schools do comparatively little, for want of educated instructors. Without good teaching, a school is but a name. An institution for training men to train the young would be a fountain of living waters, sending forth streams to refresh present and future ages. As yet, our legislators have denied to the poor and laboring classes this principal means of their elevation. We trust they will not always prove blind to the highest interest of the State.

“ We want better teachers, and more teachers, for all classes of society, for rich and poor, for children and adults. We want that the resources of the community should be directed to the procuring of better instructors, as its highest concern. One of the surest signs of the regeneration of society will be, the elevation of the art of teaching to the highest rank in the community. When a people shall learn, that its greatest benefactors and most important members are men devoted to the liberal instruction of all its classes, to the work of raising to life its buried intellect, it will have opened to itself the path of true glory. This truth is making its way. Socrates is now regarded as the greatest man in an age of great men. The name of *king* has grown dim before that of *apostle*. To teach, whether by word or action, is the highest function on earth.

“ Nothing is more needed, than that men of superior gifts and of benevolent spirit should devote themselves to the instruction of the less enlightened classes in the great end of

life, in the dignity of their nature, in their rights and duties, in the history, laws, and institutions of their country, in the philosophy of their employments, in the laws, harmonies, and productions of outward nature, and, especially, in the art of bringing up children in health of body, and in vigor and purity of mind. We need a new profession or vocation, the object of which shall be to wake up the intellect in those spheres where it is now buried in habitual slumber.

“We want a class of liberal-minded instructors, whose vocation it shall be, to place the views of the most enlightened minds within the reach of a more and more extensive portion of their fellow-creatures. The wealth of a community should flow out like water for the preparation and employment of such teachers, for enlisting powerful and generous minds in the work of giving impulse to their race.

“Nor let it be said that men, able and disposed to carry on this work, must not be looked for in such a world as ours. Christianity, which has wrought so many miracles of beneficence, which has sent forth so many apostles and martyrs, so many Howards and Clarksons, can raise up laborers for this harvest also. Nothing is needed but a new pouring out of the spirit of Christian love, nothing but a new comprehension of the brotherhood of the human race, to call forth efforts which seem impossibilities in a self-seeking and self-indulging age.”

The legislature of the present year are fully impressed with the necessity of a provision for the education of school teachers, as appears from the Report of the Committee on Education, read in the House on the 22d of March last, and accepted, carrying with it an appropriation of ten thousand dollars, with the most gratifying unanimity. They thus express themselves, in language becoming our ancient Commonwealth ;

“That the highest interest in Massachusetts is, and will always continue to be, the just and equal instruction of all her citizens, so far as the circumstances of each individual will permit it to be imparted ; that her chief glory, for two hundred years, has been the extent in which this instruction was diffused, the result of provident legislation, to promote the common cause, and secure the perpetuity of the common interest ; that, for many years, a well-grounded apprehension has been entertained, of the neglect of our common schools by large portions of our community, and of the comparative degradation to which these institutions might fall from such neglect ; that the friends of universal education have long looked to the

legislature for the establishment of one or more seminaries devoted to the purpose of supplying qualified teachers for the town and district schools, by whose action alone other judicious provisions of law could be carried into full effect ; * * * that, although much has been done within two or three years, for encouragement of our town schools by positive enactment, and more by the liberal spirit, newly awakened in our several communities, yet the number of competent teachers is found, by universal experience, so far inadequate to supply the demand for them, as to be the principal obstacle to improvement, and the greatest deficiency of our republic."

The views of the Board of Education on this point are substantially those of the legislature. They remark in their Report of February last, that it is matter of too familiar observation to need repetition, that there are all degrees of skill and success on the part of teachers ; nor can it be deemed unsafe to insist, that, while occupations requiring a very humble degree of intellectual effort and attainment demand a long-continued training, it cannot be, that the arduous and manifold duties of the instructor of youth should be as well performed without, as with, a specific preparation for them. In fact, it must be admitted, as the voice of reason and experience, that institutions for the formation of teachers must be established among us, before the all-important work of forming the minds of our children can be performed in the best possible manner, and with the greatest attainable success.

In those foreign countries where the greatest attention has been paid to the work of education, schools for teachers have formed an important feature in their systems, and with the happiest result. The art of imparting instruction has been found, like every other art, to improve by cultivation in institutions established for that specific object. New importance has been attached to the calling of the instructor by public opinion, from the circumstance, that his vocation has been deemed one requiring systematic preparation and culture. Whatever tends to degrade the profession in his own mind, or that of the public, of course, impairs his usefulness ; and this result must follow from regarding instruction as a business which in itself requires no previous training.

A well-timed act of noble, public-spirited munificence on the part of an individual, in the donation of ten thousand dollars towards the establishment of Normal Schools, led to the appropriation, on the part of the State, of the same sum, for

the same purpose, by the Resolves of the 19th of April, 1838, resolves fit for the anniversary of the battle of Lexington. It is understood that the Board of Education, at their annual meeting in the last week of May last, determined to take immediate measures for the establishment of one or more Normal Schools ; and we are happy to learn, that measures are now in train with every prospect of success, and that the most liberal spirit of coöperation is manifested in more than one section of the State ; so that a beginning will no doubt soon be made in the great enterprise of preparing adequate teachers for our common schools.

“Wherever the discharge of my duties has led me through the State, with whatever intelligent men I have conversed, the conviction has been expressed with entire unanimity,” says the Secretary of the Board, “that there is an extensive want of competent teachers for the common schools.” School committees allege, in justification of their approval of incompetent persons, the utter impossibility of obtaining better for the compensation offered. Yet it is often urged, that it would be useless to attempt to educate teachers, because the compensation is too small to induce young men of talents into the profession, or to justify an expense of time and means in preparing for it. This objection is, to some extent, plausible ; yet there are some obvious considerations which serve for an answer.

1. Educate teachers, and the compensation will be increased. If you furnish better teachers for the public schools, private schools will be discontinued, and leave at liberty a fund for public teachers. The average wages per month of the public teachers, including board, are for males, twenty-five dollars and forty-four cents, and for females, eleven dollars and thirty-eight cents. Subtract board at two dollars and fifty cents a week for males, and one dollar and fifty cents a week for females, and we have fifteen dollars and forty-four cents, for the male teachers, and five dollars and thirty-eight cents for female teachers, exclusive of board. If one half of the private schools were discontinued, and the expenditure of one hundred and sixty-four thousand dollars transferred to the public schools, this addition would raise the wages of teachers, exclusive of board, to twenty-five dollars for the males, and nine dollars for the females per month, unless the time of keeping school were lengthened.

2. If female teachers can be educated in the most perfect manner, they would be employed with great advantage in many of the schools now kept by men. There are two thousand three hundred and seventy male teachers employed in the public schools. Suppose females, at nine dollars a month, exclusive of board, to take the places of one half this number, a fund will remain sufficient to raise the wages of the remaining twelve hundred teachers, from twenty-five to forty-one dollars per month, exclusive of board, or at the rate of four hundred and ninety-two dollars a year, which we do not hesitate to say, as an average price for the whole State, is quite high enough to secure the services of gentlemen every way competent, in the business of teaching as a permanent profession. It is not necessary, then, that the public should raise a dollar more than they now do, unless they wish the schools to be kept a longer time. What the public now pay will enable them, by returning patronage from private to public schools, and by employing a larger proportion of female teachers, to offer such a compensation as will not only procure an adequate supply of well-educated young men and women for the profession, but even cause a competition among them for employment, instead of the difficulty now experienced by committees to find one competent candidate by long and diligent inquiry.

3. The calculation does not stop here. It is true economy to buy an article that is worth your money, and many have been ruined by buying cheap pennyworths in education no less than in trade. A good master will teach and benefit a school more in two months, than a master poorly qualified in a year. It will be found much cheaper to employ the best teachers. A boy kept till he is eighteen in an ordinary district school, and then sent for three years to a common country academy, is not so well fitted for active life at twenty-one, as every boy might be at sixteen in such a school as ought to be kept in every district in the Commonwealth, and well might be, if we had our essential Normal schools in full operation. Whoever, therefore, will be still content to give his son no better education than we have mentioned, may have it at less than the present cost, by employing the best teachers, and his son produce an income, instead of requiring an expense, for the last five years of minority. But he who gives his children a comparatively superior education

in the present state of things, would not rest satisfied till he had educated them in the same degree above the improved standard. And, in so doing, he would not depart from the strictest economy ; for an enlightened community produces and accumulates wealth faster, in a vastly greater ratio, than the proportionate additional cost of their education. A million of dollars a year, judiciously applied to the improvement of young heads and hearts, for the next thirty years, would not merely be refunded, but the State would be much more than thirty millions richer in visible property at the end of the period.

But we are tired of reducing the riches of the soul to a metallic standard. Though in this trading, and banking, and speculating generation, in which even a steam engine ciphers, and keeps its reckoning of loss and gain, such a course of ratiocination may be necessary to gain the good cause a hearing with a class of matter-of-fact philosophers, yet to us it has always seemed to be almost in the spirit of the question of the Adversary, a question full of devilish wisdom, “Doth Job fear God for nought ?” At least, it savours too much of the temper of that member of the British Parliament who said to John Howard, “I don’t doubt you get well paid for all your trouble.” Is there then nothing worth having, except what is equivalent to money ? Yes, there is much ; but those who realize how much, are strong upon our side already, and have no need to be converted. We join issue, therefore, with those, a part of whose creed it is, that the promises held out by education ought to be redeemable in specie ; and we say to them, if they will pause and lend an ear a moment, that it is not enough that their children should be intelligent and virtuous, even if that were possible in the neglect of all others, but their neighbour’s children must possess intelligence and virtue also, or their own children must pay for the deficiency, ay, pay for it specifically in money. The question is, whether it is not both cheaper and pleasanter to pay through the school committee than through the overseers of the poor, to support schools than jails, teachers than executioners, and to build writing-desks than gal-lows.

The Reverend Dr. B. Forde, for many years the Ordinary of Newgate, remarks, in his hints for the improvement of the police, “The ignorance of the inferior classes of society is

the first and great cause of the multitudinous depredations which are daily and nightly committed. Idleness is the second. 1st. Public schools, under the care, control, and inspection of a zealous parochial committee, ought to be established throughout the whole kingdom, if possible ; in which religion, morality, and a moderate degree of learning, should be taught to the poor, free of every expense. 2d. Work ought to be provided for the industrious."

Sir Richard Phillips, sheriff of London, says, that on the Memorial addressed to the sheriffs by 152 criminals in Newgate, 25 only signed their names in a fair hand, 26 in an illegible scrawl, 101 were *marksmen*, signing with a cross. Few of the prisoners could read with facility, more than half could not read at all, most of them thought books useless, and were totally ignorant of the nature, object, and end of religion.

The same phenomenon presents itself in all American prisons. The Eleventh of the admirable Reports of the Prison Discipline Society gives these facts, which might be multiplied almost indefinitely. In Connecticut, no convict ever sent to the State prison had a liberal education, or belonged to either of the learned professions. One half were unable to write, and one sixth to read. Of the 66 convicts of 1835, the crimes of only four required for their commission ability either to read or write. In Auburn Prison, of 228 convicts in 1835, 3 had an academical education ; 59 could read, write, and cipher ; 56 could read and write only ; 50 could read only ; and 60 could not read. In the New Penitentiary in Philadelphia, of 217 prisoners received in 1835, 63 can neither read nor write, 69 can read only, and 85 can read and write, but most of them very indifferently. The chaplain of the Ohio Penitentiary remarks ; "Not only in our prison, but in others, depraved appetites and corrupt habits, which have led to the commission of crime, are usually found with the ignorant, uninformed, and duller part of mankind. Of the 276, nearly all below mediocrity, 175 are grossly ignorant, and, in point of education, scarcely capable of transacting the ordinary business of life."

Such is the universal testimony of all competent witnesses. "*Poor ignorant creatures, Sir,*" said a jailer to Leigh Hunt, in that phrase giving a general description of all his prisoners.

Dr. Forde was right in supposing that good public schools would be the best remedy for the prevalent disposition to crime. A comparison of Scotland with England and Ireland shows this very forcibly. Mr. H. Fielding stated, that “during the number of years he presided in Bow Street, only six Scotchmen were ever brought before him ; but the greater part of the persons committed were of the sister island, *where the natural dispositions of the people are quite as good*, but the system of education is neither so strict nor so generally adopted as in Scotland.” Mr. Hume stated, “that one quarter sessions for the single town of Manchester sent more felons to the plantations, than all the Scotch judges do for ordinary in a twelvemonth.” Lord Justice Clerk, in an address to the Lord Provost and Magistrates of Glasgow, in 1808, took occasion to observe, that the commitments for criminal offences in England and Wales exceeded four thousand a year, a number nearly equal to all the commitments in Scotland since the Union. If his Lordship was astonished at four thousand commitments in a year, for England and Wales, we know not what opinion he would form of the present state of crime there. We have before us the official returns of criminals for 1837, made up at the Home Department on the last day of January, and as this document is not within the reach of most of our readers, we give the facts bearing on this point, prefixing a few years for comparison, to show the progress of crime.

The number of persons committed or bailed in England and Wales, was,

In 1828, 16,564.	1832, 20,829.	1835, 20,731.
1829, 18,675.	1833, 20,072.	1836, 20,984.
1830, 18,107.	1834, 22,451.	1837, 23,612.
1831, 19,647.		

Giving an average for the last four years of 21,944 commitments in a year, — a most melancholy fact.

For a comparison between the three kingdoms we give one year. In 1834, there were committed or bailed,

		Sentenced to Death.	Executed.
In England and Wales,	22,451.	480.	34.
Ireland,	21,381.	197.	43.
Scotland,	2,711.	6.	4.

In Ireland education is most neglected ; the gibbet takes account of it. Beccaria, in 1767, predicted, that the punish-

ment of death would not survive that happy period, "when knowledge instead of ignorance shall become the portion of the greater number."

To show the effect of ignorance in the production of these crimes we give the degrees of instruction of offenders for 1837; and, to prove the gratifying fact, that the proportion of educated offenders diminishes, we give the per-centage of each class for 1836, and for 1837.

	Male.	Female.	1836.	1837.
Whole number of commitments,	19,407.	4,205.	—	—
Unable either to read or write,	6,684.	1,780.	33.52.	35.85.
Able to read and write imperfectly,	10,147.	2,151.	52.33.	52.08.
Able to read and write well,	2,057.	177.	10.56.	9.46.
Instruction superior to mere reading and writing well,	98.	3.	0.91.	0.43.
Instruction could not be ascertained,	421.	94.	2.68.	2.18.

Of all the criminal offenders, therefore, be it remembered, less than one half of one per cent. have received any education beyond reading and writing. There were 358 offenders of twelve years or under, and more than half of these young sinners were totally uninstructed.

Lord Justice Clerk, having noticed the inferior number of criminals in Scotland, proceeds to say, that, supposing his calculation to be accurate, it calls upon us for very serious reflection to discover the causes of this proud inferiority.

"I think we have not far to look," says his Lordship, "for the causes of the good order and morality of our people."

"The institution of parochial schools, in the manner and to the extent in which they are established in Scotland, is, I believe, peculiar to ourselves; and it is an institution, to which, however simple in its nature and unobtrusive in its operation, I am persuaded we are chiefly to ascribe the regularity of conduct by which we are distinguished. The child of the meanest peasant, of the lowest mechanic in this country, may, and most of them do, receive a virtuous education from their earliest youth. At our parochial schools, they are not only early initiated in the principles of our holy religion, and in the soundest doctrines of morality, but most of them receive different degrees of education in other respects, which qualify them to earn their bread in life in various ways; and which, independent even of religious instruction, by enlarging the understanding, necessarily raises a man in his own estimation, and

sets him above the mean and dirty crimes to which the temptations and hardships of life might otherwise expose him."

"The early establishment of parochial schools, &c. * * * have unquestionably raised the character and improved the condition of the lower orders in Scotland, have arrested the progress of vice and idleness, and have rendered the maintenance and management of the poor a comparatively easy task, and a work of real benevolence."

In twenty-two years from 1750, there were 116 executions in the Midland counties, 117 in the Norfolk circuit ; and in twenty-two years from 1749, there were 678 in London, or about *thirty* per annum ; while in Scotland, as near the same period as we can ascertain, they averaged less than *four* per annum.

A great law authority, Chief Justice Fortescue, assigned a very different reason for the disgraceful superiority in number of the English executions in his time. "More men are hanged in Englonde in one year," says he, "than in Fraunce in seven, *because the English have better hartes* ; the Scotchmenne likewise never *dare* rob, but only commit larcenies." Upon this, the Reverend Francis Wrangham very fairly remarks, "True ; they are taught the terrors of the Lord and eschew evil." We attach more weight to the remark of Dr. Currie, than to that of the old English judge. "A majority of those who suffer the punishment of death for their crimes, in every part of England, are, it is believed, unable to read or write," says Dr. Currie ; he might have said, nearly all of them, instead of a majority. "A slight acquaintance with the peasantry of Scotland," says the Doctor, "will serve to convince an unprejudiced observer, that they possess a degree of intelligence not generally found among the same class of men in the other countries of Europe. In the very humblest condition of the Scottish peasants, every one can read, and most persons are more or less skilled in writing or arithmetic, and have obtained a degree of information corresponding to these acquirements."

The Scotch school system was originated by an act of King James the Sixth, of the 10th of December, 1616, four years before the landing of the Pilgrims, and ratified by an act of Charles the First, 1633 ; but the first effectual provision was by an act of 1646, for the first time compelling the assessment of a tax and payment of a master's salary, in

every parish in the kingdom, for the express purpose of educating the poor ; “a law,” says the enthusiastic Scotch writer last quoted, “which may challenge comparison with any act of legislation to be found in the records of history, whether we consider the wisdom of the ends in view, the simplicity of the means employed, or the provisions made to render these means effectual to their purpose.” This excellent statute was, of course, repealed on the restoration of Charles the Second, in 1660 ; but it was reënacted in 1696, in precisely the same terms, and is the basis of the present system, the noble legacy of the Scottish Parliament. Its effect on national character may be considered to have commenced about the period of the Union, 1707, and, with the peace and security arising from that event, to have produced the extraordinary change in favor of industry and good morals, which the character of the common people of Scotland has since undergone.

The school system has not operated differently in Scotland from its uniform effect wherever it has been tried. Holland, Prussia, and the Pays de Vaud, the best educated countries in Europe, are also the most moral. Prussia, which has carried her common-school system to higher perfection than any other nation, is remarkably free from crime. For seventeen years, ending in 1834, according to the statement of Herr Von Kampz, the executions in Prussia were 123 ; in 1832, 1833, and 1834, there were only *two* in each year, and the average number of murders in a year was *seven and one third*. Prussia has a population of 13,566,897, according to the Weimar Almanac for 1837. These numbers, therefore, are much smaller in proportion to population than in Massachusetts ; lesser crimes, it is believed, are proportionally rare in Prussia.

To show how great has been the influence of the school establishment of Scotland on the peasantry of that country, it is only necessary to revert to the description given by that true-hearted patriot, Fletcher of Saltoun. In the year 1698, he declared, that, “There are at this day in Scotland, two hundred thousand people begging from door to door. And though the number of them be perhaps double to what it was formerly, by reason of this present great distress (a famine then prevailed), yet in all times there have been about one hundred thousand of these vagabonds, who have lived with-

out any regard or subjection either to the laws of the land, or even those of God and nature." He then ascribes to them abominations too vile to be quoted; and goes on to tell us, that no magistrate ever could discover that they had been baptized, or in what way one in a hundred went out of the world. They lived in promiscuous incest, and were guilty of robbery, and sometimes murder. "In years of plenty," says he, "many thousands of them meet together in the mountains, where they feast and riot for many days; and at country weddings, markets, *burials*, and other public occasions, they are to be seen, both men and women, perpetually drunk, cursing, blaspheming, and fighting together."

This is no true picture of Scotch life now. In less than half a century from Fletcher's time, common schools had softened this savage race, and in less than a century transformed them into the most moral and orderly people in Europe. There are few beggars in Scotland; there are no poor rates in Scotland; while in England every eighth or ninth man is a pauper, and the poor rate for forty years has consumed some five or six millions of pounds sterling a year. In Scotland the wages of labor maintain the laboring classes; in England they are inadequate by an alarming deficiency. In Scotland they have fewer crimes, and those which occur are less malignant. In 1834, the proportions were as follows.

	Sentenced to Death.	Executed.	Sentenced to Transportation for Life.	14 Years.	7 Years.
In England,	480.	34.	864.	688.	2,501.
Scotland,	6.	4.	30.	47.	195.

These are the points of difference. England saves the expense of public schools, and the saving costs her fifty millions of dollars a year in Courts, Prisons, Penal Colonies, and Poor Rates, not to reckon ruined hopes, broken hearts, blasted characters, and the wretchedness of tens of thousands living in shame and agony, a living death, whom free schools would have brought up to honor and happiness and a useful life. England has left the public morality to take care of itself, and the comment is heard in groans and written in blood.

We will go into no further argument to prove that education is cheaper than ignorance; and that the most rigid economy, so that it be not stone-blind to consequences, would dictate a liberal expenditure for the preservation and eleva-

tion of the public morals, and for the exercise, developement, and wholesome sustenance of the public intellect. Nor will we waste a word upon the self-evident proposition, that our education will operate beneficially in proportion as it is perfected. It must be perfected, and that by providing better teachers.

The Normal school must begin with females, because there is more unappropriated female talent than can be brought into action ; because females can be educated cheaper, and, in the first instance quicker, and better, and will teach cheaper after they are qualified ; because the primary schools, which properly belong to females, are in the worst condition, and need most to be reformed, and because, by reforming these, we thereby improve all the higher schools. By raising up the foundation we necessarily elevate the superstructure. An improvement in the rudiments of education, among children of from four to ten years of age, would be felt through all the schools as these young scholars passed into higher classes. The public would perceive the benefit, and enter with alacrity into the measures necessary to carry out a thorough reformation.

Let the high work, so auspiciously commenced, go on steadily to its glorious consummation. Let Massachusetts, which for two hundred years has led the way in the cause of good learning, suffer none to go before her now. Let her still bear aloft the torch which others will be proud to follow. While others emulate her bright example, she will have contributed largely to that mighty movement, which is to enfranchise and to bless the world.

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